Utilization of CWC godowns by FCI

521. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether various trade unions are demanding that godowns of the Central Warehousing Corporation be used by the Food Corporation of India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the Food Corporation of India is unable to introduce Best Management Practices to meet this legitimate demand;

(d) whether Food Corporation of India is interested in only transacting with private godowns rather than the Central Wareshousing Corporation; and

(e) the steps proposed to review the entire issue of edging out the Central Warehousing Corporation from the business of Food Corporation of India in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD and PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The Food Corporation of India (FCI) has informed that they have not received any such demand from the Trade Unions for use of the godowns of Central Warehousing Corporation.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) The FCI hire private godowns to meet the requirements of Public Distribution System and other Welfare Schemes only where Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC)/State Warehousing Corporation (SWC) godowns are not available or where CWC/SWC godowns in the area are fully utilized.

(e) There is no proposal to reduce the business given to CWC from FCI, rather hiring of CWC/SWC godowns is preferred over private godowns.

Transportation subsidy for rice to Arunachal Pradesh

522. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Food Corporation of India (FCI) has

paid Rs. 170 crores as excess reimbursement to the Arunachal Pradesh Government in just one year, against transportation subsidy for rice;

(b) whether it is a fact that the length of motorable roads has increased, but the FCI subsidy has increased instead of decreasing;

(c) if so, whether Government have made any investigations in this regard; and

(d) if so, the action proposed in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) A special audit, by a team from Food Corporation of India (FCI), of the reimbursements made to the Government of Arunachal Pradesh under the Hill Transport Subsidy Scheme has reported that during the years 2002-03 and 2003-04 an amount of Rs. 193.52 crores was paid by the FCI to the State Government in excess of the permissible payments under the Scheme.

(b) The higher transport subsidy claim is reported by the State Government on account of various factors *viz.* upward revision of transportation costs and increase in offtake of foodgrains over the past few years.

(c) and (d) Besides deputation of a special Audit Team of FCI to Arunachal Pradesh to examine the records of payments made under the scheme, the Central Vigilance Commission has also been requested to conduct an enquiry into the matter. The FCI has also been requested to fix responsibility and initiate suitable vigilance proceedings against guilty officers.

Consumer Protection

523. SHRI LALITBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the steps Government are taking for better consumer protection;

(b) whether steps have been taken to enhance the effectiveness of working of Central Consumer Protection Council;

(c) the status of the various working groups constituted under his Ministry; and